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ANTI-SLAVERY REPORTER.

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I.—LAWS AND MANNERS OF JAMAICA ILLUSTRATED.

1. *Presumption of Slavery from Colour.*

“THE Christian Record” of Jamaica, continues to supply valuable illustrations of the character and effects of Colonial Slavery. The fourth number of that work which has recently reached us, contains, among other excellent papers, a letter from a correspondent on *the presumption of slavery from the colour of the skin*, one of the manifold iniquities of this most unrighteous system, on which we have frequently animadverted in the Anti-Slavery Reporter. After some stringent introductory remarks by the editor of the Christian Record, his correspondent, who signs himself Robert Grundy, proceeds as follows :—

“I was in a gentleman’s house the other day, and while sitting by myself in the hall, I took up the Royal Gazette of November 27th, 1830, and read the following advertisement :

“*Morant-Bay Workhouse, Oct. 27, 1830.*

“Notice is hereby given, that, unless the undermentioned slave is taken out of this workhouse, prior to Thursday the 23d day of December next, he will, on that day, between the hours of ten and twelve o’clock in the forenoon, be put up to public sale, and sold to the highest and best bidder, at the office of F. and J. M’Donald, in Morant Bay, agreeably to the workhouse law now in force, for payment of his fees :

“Emanuel Brown, a creole of Curacao, 5 feet 5½ inches, wears whiskers, some of his upper front teeth are lost ; says he is free, and that he came to this island in the schooner Eliza, Captain Tighe, during the American war, and that his papers are with a negro man belonging to Wheelersfield, named Richard Saunders ; taken up by the maroons, and committed by Thomas M’Cormock, Esq., August 2.

“This negro was brought before a Special Sessions of the Peace, on the 6th September, but could not establish his claim to freedom, having no document whatever.

“Ordered, that the above be published in the newspapers, appointed by law, for eight weeks. By order of the Commissioners. F. and J. M’Donald, Sup.

“I had often seen such advertisements before, but, somehow or other, never thought much about them. This time, however, it came into my mind, all of a sudden : what a strange proceeding is this ! To buy and sell *slaves*, some people say, is bad enough. They tell us it is quite contrary to the Word of God ; but on that subject I know there are different opinions ; so let it pass. Here, however, said I to myself, is a man who declares he is free, and *nobody comes to contradict him*. He gives a history of part of his life, which surely ought to be believed, till it is proved to be false. I think this would be good law in England ;

and I am sure it is no more than justice. But, sir, that it is not law in Jamaica, the foregoing advertisement fully proves. The man is brought before what is called a 'special sessions of the peace,' though I think that fellow, Wilberforce, or that other fellow, Macaulay, would give it a harder name, and talk something about 'pirates' or 'piracy,') and there we are told 'could not establish his claim to freedom, having no document whatever.'

"I bought a new pair of trowsers the other day; but if they brought me before a 'special sessions of the peace,' I am sure, if it must be done by written documents, I could not establish 'my claim' to them; and must go away without my trowsers. Here, however, is a much greater loss sustained, and that too, by a still poorer man—even the loss of his liberty. We all love liberty—indeed there are no people more clamorous about their's than the gentlemen of Jamaica, at least if we may judge from what they have been doing, and saying lately. It is not very long since the magistrates of Trelawny assembled to resist some 'infringement,' I think they called it, of their rights, attempted by the British government; and the worthy justices of St. Thomas in the East, (the very men who formed what the advertisement calls a 'special sessions of the peace,') spiritedly met together, to back their oppressed brethren of Trelawny. It is not very long since the magistrates of St. Ann's refused even to reconsider their proceedings in the case of Mr. Bridges, and adopted some flaming resolutions about 'the unconstitutional interference of the colonial secretary.' It is not very long since the grand jury of Middlesex, in their great anxiety for the defence of their rights and privileges, as *freemen*, forgot that they were upon their oaths, 'diligently to enquire, and true presentment make'; and refused to go into the case of the reverend accused, merely making enquiry whether a council of protection had been held, and ascertaining its decision. And the brave editor of the *Courant*, told us then, 'that they had nobly performed their duty, and vindicated the injured rights of their fellow colonists;' and yet, Mr. Editor, if these men, thus strenuous in defence of their liberty, should be brought before a 'special sessions of the peace,' I doubt if one among them all could 'establish his claim' to freedom by written documents, and, if not, would not the 'special sessions of the peace' be authorized, upon the principle recognized in the advertisement before us, first to commit them to the workhouse, and then, secondly, to sell them, for having put the parish to the expence of board and lodging?

"From this advertisement I have gained one piece of information, at all events. I have been taught the meaning of the word '*slave*' in Jamaica. Mind you, it is said 'unless the undermentioned *slave* be taken out of this workhouse, &c.' A *slave*, then, is a man of very dark complexion, who says that he is free, and satisfactorily explains, how he came, in the capacity of a freeman, to this happy land, and whose story no one ventures to contradict, but who '*has no documents*' to tell it for him. This is good, but what I am going to say is better. Some years ago, if there be any truth in history, Englishmen, and, I believe creoles too, used to go to some place away over the seas, called Africa, and there steal free men to make them slaves. The British government, very properly, I think, forbade this practice of taking, by force, a man's liberty from him, and declared it to be *PIRACY*, that is, the worst species of *robbery*. Now, I know there is this vast difference, between the practice of which the advertisement before us records one example, and the practice declared to be robbery by the king and the people of England; that in the former case, the practitioners stay in Jamaica, and that in the latter, they went to Africa. But, Mr. Editor, will you, who are a learned man, I am sure, tell us in how many other respects they differ? for in good truth, I am unable to say.

"I must just ask two questions, and then have done. Suppose, long after '*the slave*' has been sold, 'the documents' should all be found, and it should really appear that the man did tell the truth, although he had a black skin; what's to become of him? Is the buyer, (for it is nonsense to say '*owner*') to lose the price of him, or is the parish, or the 'special sessions of the peace,' to pay it back again; or what is to be done? One more question; when the ex-

penses of 'entertainment' in the workhouse are all paid, what, after the auction, is done with the surplus money? Does it go to the 'special sessions of the peace;' or what becomes of it?"

2. *Case of W. O. Chapman and two Negro boys.*

In Nos. 68 and 69 of the Reporter we gave some account of the cruelties inflicted on a slave by William Ogilvy Chapman, overseer of Windsor Castle estate, in the parish of St. George's, and of the disgraceful conduct of the Council of Protection of that parish in most iniquitously screening this man from trial, and denying all redress to the maltreated slave. The Rev. Mr. Hanna, Curate of St. George's, who had the Christian courage to denounce this case to the public and to the colonial authorities, was assailed by the public press of the island (with the exception of the *Watchman*) with the most envenomed obliquy, and held up to colonial opprobrium as a partizan of the "Saints" and a spy of the Anti-Slavery Society; and two members of this same Council of Protection, Mr. Gray and Mr. Maxwell, in an attempt to vindicate their vote on this occasion, while they were forced to admit the facts stated by Mr. Hanna, concluded their address to the public of Jamaica in the following terms:

"We regret exceedingly, that a clergyman of the Established Church," (meaning Mr. Hanna,) "should identify himself with a faction that seeks the destruction of the Colonies, or that he should have taken such a zealous part in a political matter, of which he could have only a confused and superficial knowledge by retail. He ought to recollect that he was sent here not to destroy Temples, but to build them up; not to weaken the fabric of our institutions, assailed by every heartless demagogue, but to add strength and unanimity to them, to preach peace and good-will to men, and a cheerful obedience to constituted authorities. We are as feelingly alive to the melioration of our slaves, and at all times ready to punish wanton severity, as any class in the country, but the rude materials of which our population are formed, require no small degree of firmness and consistency to maintain the authority of a manager. We have nothing to fear from Anti-Colonial virulence, if we are true to ourselves: once divided, with so many irresponsible incendiaries amongst us, and we shall soon see our enemies triumph, and this beautiful island, now the seat of peace, happiness, and plenty, become a sterile desert."

The conduct of such "slave protectors," in thus screening from punishment the most intolerable outrages against the slaves, in open contempt of the inoperative slave laws which they had assisted to enact and were vainly sworn to execute, and in thus identifying themselves and the planters in general with such delinquents as Chapman, could not fail to encourage the frequent perpetration of similar enormities; and we accordingly find by the last arrivals that his former impunity has led on this man to new excesses of cruelty and brutality almost incredible even in the demoralizing atmosphere of a slave colony. The disgusting nature of some of the details will probably prove offensive to many of our readers, but they must not on that account be suppressed. If it be revolting and abhorrent to our feelings even to read of such things, with what sentiments ought we to regard the conduct of those who perpetrate them, or that of the scarcely less criminal colonial magistrates and assemblies who have constantly resisted all adequate redress of such abuses until they have attained a pitch of enormity which renders concealment vain. Mr.

Chapman, proceeding from bad to worse, as Mr. Bridges and others had done before him, has at last brought himself within the jurisdiction of the Attorney General, under such circumstances that even a Jamaica Grand Jury did not venture to throw out the bill. The following are the entire details of the case as reported in the *Watchman* newspaper:—

“*Rex v. Chapman.*—The Attorney-General briefly stated, that this was an indictment preferred against Mr. Chapman for an act of brutal outrage committed on the persons of two negro boys, who were in a bad state of health from dirt eating. He caused these boys to eat their own excrement; and afterwards compelled them to scourge each other in a very severe manner. He was instructed to call witnesses who would prove the charges laid in the indictment.

“Mr. Spencer is book-keeper on Windsor Castle estate; knows the prisoner, he was the overseer; recollects the boys in question; between the 18th and 20th October, can't be positive, the two negro boys were in the hospital for eating dirt, they were ordered out at two o'clock on one of those days by the overseer to work, but they did not go, and were flogged; he again ordered them to be flogged; witness said, oh! no, let them alone, they will go to their work to-morrow probably; the house boy said they had dirtied themselves; Chapman said, make them eat it; the house boy, Henry Forbes, said they would not do so for him; Chapman then came down, took the whip out of Henry's hand, and caused them to eat it; of this he is positive.

“*Cross-examined by Mr. Panton.*—Was quite near enough to hear and see what passed; knows a person of the name of Donn; they are brother book-keepers; have had several conversations with him relative to this transaction; had a conversation with him prior to the meeting of the magistrates at Golden Grove; never told him any other story than the one he had just told; is positive of the truth of what he had said.

“Dr. Robertson sworn—Is medical attendant at Windsor Castle; knows the two boys; their condition was very bad; he recommended Mr. Chapman to take the boys into the house, in order to their being taken care of and properly fed; Chapman said he had nothing to give them, if he had he would. It appeared to him that they were more hungry than any thing else; this is as far as regards one boy; the other was reduced to a skeleton, from the want of food; I told Mr. Chapman to take him from the hospital, and give him food; he said he had none; I told him to apply to Mr. Lambie if he had none. On my second visit to the hospital I found the boys all scratched; I asked Chapman what was the matter with them, he said they had been fighting; I thought it very strange that two boys who were almost unable to stand could have been fighting; they were all bloody and bruised; I recommended them to be taken care of and fed; medicine could have been of no use whatever. On my third visit there was no improvement at all in their condition; one of them was about seven, the other about nine years of age; one was naked, the other partially so; he had some rags about him.

“Case for the Crown closed.

“Mr. Panton, for the defence, said he had no evidence to offer.

“Chief Justice—Gentlemen, you have heard the evidence which has been adduced, and you have also heard that there is no evidence in the defence. The Court expected that in the course of the cross-examination evidence would have been elicited of a contrary description—this has not been done. The evidence, therefore, remains uncontroverted—and leaving the case to your honesty and integrity, we consider further observation from us perfectly unnecessary.

“The Jury, after consulting for a few minutes, without retiring, returned a verdict of guilty.—Upon which the Attorney-General moved that Chapman be committed.”

On this case the Editor of the *Watchman* makes the following remarks:

"The trial of Chapman is one which cannot be perused with any other feelings than those of astonishment and disgust—astonishment, that a wretch could be found in human shape, so depraved as to commit the act of which Chapman has been found guilty : and disgust, at the until now unheard-of method of punishment adopted by this man monster.

"We have been repeatedly accused of being unnecessarily severe upon those who have the management of slaves in the country parishes, and of being violent in our advocacy of the amelioration of their condition, but we would ask those who thus charge us with undue severity, whether the tender mercies of such men as Chapman are not cruelties, and if it be possible to find language sufficiently strong to express our reprobation of such conduct. It is easy to anticipate the reply which the advocates for the perpetuity of slavery will bring forward. We are aware that it will unblushingly be asserted that such are only exceptions to the general conduct of overseers. A little, very little acquaintance with the system will, however, satisfy reasonable men to the contrary. So long as unlimited power is vested in the hands of men who equally disregard all laws, whether human or divine, so long will cases of cruelty continue to present themselves.

"Some of our readers, perhaps, remember the remarks which appeared in the public prints of this city, and the address which the grand jury thought it advisable to present to his honour the chief Justice, in consequence of the open and honest manner in which he gave expression to his abhorrence of the conduct of this very individual. We then thought, and so would any man not blindly wedded to the system of slavery, that the expressions then used reflected credit on the head and heart of their author.

"Mr. Chapman has managed at last to get himself under the lash of the law. In August last he committed, with impunity an act which, but for the improper conduct of the St. George's magistrates, would have been visited with that punishment which it so richly deserved.—It was then thought by the magistrates that he 'acted more from an error of the head than the heart; and as it was his first offence, wished him to be reprimanded.' What effect their indulgent conduct has had is manifest."

II.—DISTURBANCES IN ANTIGUA. PROHIBITION OF SUNDAY MARKETS.

SOME disturbances have recently occurred among the slave population of Antigua, in consequence of the total abolition of the Sunday Negro Market, without allowing any other period for their accommodation. The details have been copied into the London papers from the Colonial journals, together with additional statements from private letters, and the whole commented on by most of the newspaper writers and their correspondents in a strain of wilful, or of ignorant misrepresentation exceedingly disgraceful to the conductors (with some few exceptions) of the English daily press. The following extract of a letter, dated Antigua, April 1, which we copy from the *Morning Herald*, gives the leading facts of this "insurrection," as it has been termed, and exhibits at the same time a fair sample of the truth and candour of the Colonial partizans on such occasions :—

"The island has been under martial law since the 21st of last month, and still is. The Legislature, some short time since, passed an Act doing away with the Sunday Market altogether, and allowed a certain time (one month) after the publication, to warn the negroes. They were accordingly warned each Sunday previous, by the police, that they were not to attend on a Sunday after the month; but they were very dissatisfied, and expressed themselves in strong language to the police and magistrates; in fact, they stated their determination to attend market on the very day after the time had expired. On that day the magistrates, police constable, &c. attended at the market-place by daylight in the

morning, notwithstanding which they (the slaves) assembled in great numbers, armed with sticks, &c.; nor was the presence of the magistrates, who continued the whole day in the market, any sort of check upon them; in fact, they appeared ripe for any mischief. That very evening Mr. Lycaut's canes were set on fire, and during the night several other estates—Pells, Edward's, Rev. Mr. Gilbert's, &c. The Monday following the Governor had martial law proclaimed, and on the Monday evening a detachment of the 2d Regiment of Militia was posted at Briggus, which they had scarcely reached when six other estates were seen on fire. *The people at home and the clergy here are the sole cause of it.* When it was stated by several planters that if the Sunday market was done away it was but justice to give the negroes another day, the clergy declared they did not ask another day. Court-martials are sitting every day. One man was executed yesterday, and I suppose there will be several others. What is to become of us in this part of the world God only knows! It appears to me that the proprietors at home do not exert themselves sufficiently. When this state of things is to be at an end I know not."

Such is the statement of the Antigua correspondent: now for the facts. We shall adopt for the present the account here given of the conduct of the negroes; and, supposing that account to be correct, we maintain that no other result could have been reasonably expected by the Legislature and Governor of Antigua, as the natural effect of this their own preposterous Act of pretended amelioration, but really of wanton and inexcusable oppression. To allege, as the writer of this letter has done, that "the people at home" and the clergy in Antigua have occasioned the disturbances by *opposing* the granting of another day to the negroes on which to hold their market in lieu of Sunday, is one of those examples of reckless and audacious falsehood, for which the partizans of slavery have distinguished themselves beyond any other writers in any other controversy of modern times; and such allegations on the present occasion are well worthy of the school in which McQueen, Macdonnell, Barclay, Burge, and Co. are eminent Professors. The simple fact is, that the Antigua Assembly, after long discussion and by a large majority, passed the Act for the total abolition of the negro market on Sunday without the substitution in lieu of Sunday, of any other day during the week, although they could not but be perfectly sensible of the injurious effect of such a partial enactment in abridging the comforts and deteriorating the condition of the slaves; and this oppressive Act the authorities of the colony thought fit to enforce in defiance of the obvious consequences.

The intolerant and oppressive conduct of the Colonial assemblies, in every instance where they have attempted to legislate for the observance of the Sabbath, or the religious instruction of the slaves, has been a subject of animadversion, even to satiety, in the pages of the Anti-Slavery Reporter. No farther back than January last, in our strictures on Sir George Murray's correspondence with the Governors of Slave Colonies, (No. 73, p. 6.) we made some remarks respecting the abolition of Sunday markets in St. Vincent's, which will be found most strikingly applicable to the present occurrences in Antigua. Familiar as these remarks must be to the majority of our readers, we are induced to repeat them here verbatim, both because it would not be easy for us to state in stronger terms our reprobation of the wicked policy which has on this, as on other occasions, characterised the proceedings of the authorities of Slave Colonies; and also because the

passage in question furnishes an unanswerable reply to the unscrupulous allegations of the pro-slavery partizans (whether residing in the colonies or connected with the newspaper press at home), in mendaciously imputing to the Anti-Slavery Society, the advocacy of such rash, and oppressive, and iniquitous proceedings as have just been brought vividly under the notice of the British public, by these Antigua disturbances.

“ Sir G. Murray,” (we observed,) “ in reference to the ninth clause of the Slave Code of this island, (St. Vincent’s,) passed in December 1825, by which the Sunday markets were ordered to terminate at ten o’clock in the forenoon, says, he understands that this is wholly disregarded, and in practice absolutely nugatory; and he requests the governor, Sir C. Brisbane, to inform him what the fact really is. The reply of Sir C. Brisbane is very instructive, and throws so much light on the real nature of pretended colonial reform, and on the colonial prejudice and partizanship of at least some colonial governors, that we shall give it entire. It is dated the 22d May, 1829.

“ ‘ I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch, dated the 2nd of April, 1829, relating to the Sunday markets. It is certainly true that the efforts of the legislature have not been able hitherto to put down this irregular proceeding; and such are the inveterate habits of the negroes, arising from a long customary enjoyment (as it is estimated by them) of marketing on Sunday, that nothing but absolute force will remedy the evil at present complained of. The slaves consider the abolition of this privilege as one of the greatest hardships imposed on them; and I am of opinion that hitherto no moral improvement, or more strict observance of the Sabbath, has taken place in consequence. The prices of provisions also are increased, to the great injury of domestic and other slaves in Kingstown, who rely upon the market for subsistence. Until the negroes shall have acquired a sufficient degree of religion to induce them to observe the Sabbath from a principle of morality, they will not give up their habits of trafficking on Sundays. I have, however, endeavoured to remedy the evil as far as I can by issuing most peremptory orders to the clerk of the market, the chief constable, and all others under him, to carry the law into complete effect.’

“ On several occasions we have dwelt at great length on the unjust and oppressive policy pursued by the colonial legislatures respecting Sunday markets, a policy for which they have too ready a sanction in the unaccountable course adopted on the same subject, in the Orders in Council for the Crown colonies. We will repeat now what we said in the Reporter, No. 52, p. 67, when treating of the Act of Grenada, to prevent holding markets on Sunday. It contains no provision whatever by which the act can be made to contribute in the very slightest degree to the amelioration of the condition of the slaves. They can no longer attend Sunday markets; but no legal provision is made for their being able to attend them on any other day. No other day is given to them; nor are they on any other day protected by law from being seized and sold for their master’s debts, which would inevitably follow, in a great majority of cases, from travelling to market on any day but Sunday. To the slave, therefore, without some law

which shall appropriate a certain day to his use, and which shall protect him on that day from arrest for his master's debts, the pretended amelioration of either abolishing or restricting Sunday markets is a positive injury instead of a benefit. It is an act of cruel oppression superadded to all his other wrongs.

"This truth has been repeated in the pages of the Reporter, whenever the same unjust course has been pursued in the legislation either of the crown or of the chartered colonies. It is impossible therefore that it should not have attracted notice, and that all parties concerned should not be fully aware that the only effectual remedy which can be applied to the evil of a public market on Sunday is not only to fix, by law, another day for it, but, by law also, to give that day to the slave, and to protect him, during its course, from being seized and sold for his master's debts.

"The legislature of St. Vincent's was perfectly aware of this, and yet they affect to abolish Sunday markets without a single provision to render such abolition practicable. Doubtless the slaves consider this a great hardship, and so it is. And Sir Charles Brisbane though equally aware of the fact, insults the common sense of Parliament and of the Secretary of State, by saying *that nothing but absolute force will remedy the evil at present complained of.*" What is this but a complete misapprehension, at least, of the real nature of the case? Is not then the remedy we have proposed practicable? Has it ever been tried and found to fail? Has the slightest rational attempt been made by this governor, or by the St. Vincent legislature, to facilitate their own professed intention to abolish Sunday markets? And yet Sir C. Brisbane, offering his counsel on this subject to the Crown, to whom he is bound to give faithful counsel, tells the Secretary of State that '*nothing but absolute force will remedy the evil at present complained of;*' although he might know that a better and more effectual remedy, one too in perfect accordance with the views of his sovereign and of parliament, and one unattended with oppression and cruelty to the slave, is in the power of the legislature over which he presides; and on this he is nevertheless not only silent in his intercourse with that legislature; but, in his communications to the minister of the crown, virtually denies that any such remedy is to be found. It would be difficult for us adequately to convey our impression of such conduct."

III.—THE RECENT WEST INDIAN MANIFESTO.

A Manifesto from the West Indian Body in this country, in the shape of an Address to the people of Great Britain and Ireland, and signed by forty-one gentlemen "possessing property in the West India Colonies," has just been issued, and is now in the course of being most extensively circulated throughout the United Kingdom. We shall proceed in our next number, (which will appear forthwith,) to examine, with due attention, the adventurous statements made by the framers of this Address, and to analyse what they have given as an "abstract of the existing laws of our West India Colonies;" and we pledge ourselves to a complete exposure of the deceptive character of the representations which have been thus authoritatively sent forth with most zealous activity, and at enormous expense.

